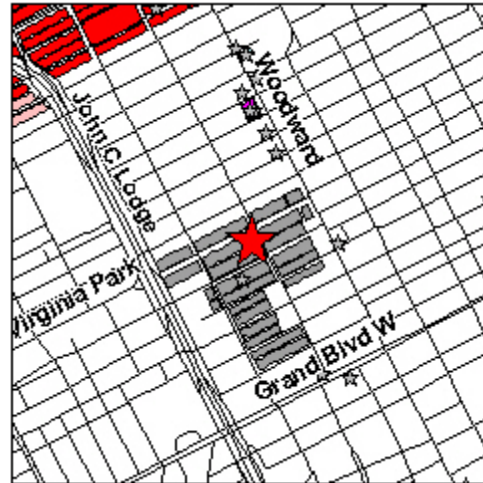# Virginia Park Historic District

General boundaries: Virginia Park from Woodward Avenue to John Lodge Service Drive.

Local	√	11/22/82
State		
State Marker		
National	√	12/2/82

Virginia Park streetscape

Historic overview:

The Virginia Park Historic District is an example of a well preserved late nineteenth to early twentieth century residential community. The residences are testimonials to the wealth of early Virginia Park residents, as the area was conceived as an upper-middle class enclave. Many homes were completed by prominent Detroit architects, and display a diversity of architectural styles.

The district was laid out in 1893. Ninety-two lots were platted and each given a name (such as Tanglewood, Thisteldown, and Sorrento) in the original plat. The developers placed a number of restrictions on area to ensure an attractive community. This quiet boulevard attracted a mix of businessmen and professionals. Due to the increasing commercialization of Woodward, as early as 1910 homeowners were concerned about the affect this would have on property values. This spurred the Virginia Avenue Improvement Association, whose goal was to re-landscape the subdivision, and who developed an attractive entranceway to the community.

In the 1930s the neighborhood began to experience first signs of decline. A member of one of Detroit's early prominent families lost money and began renting out rooms in his home. He was taken to court by his neighbors, and was prohibited from renting. However, by the 1940s several homes were used as rental property, and the 50s-60s brought more. Also, the Algiers Motel on the corner of Virginia Park and Woodward was the scene of a shooting that was one of the sparks that touched off the 1967 riots. In 1979, General Motors announced its plan to renovate the area north of their World Headquarters. This fostered rehabilitation in the Virginia Park district. Today, Virginia Park is a strong neighborhood and has an active community development corporation.

City of Detroit Planning and Development Department